UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

E

Distr.: LIMITED

E/ECA/AD HOC.MTP/3
04 August 1989

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the
draft Medium-term Plan, 1992-1997
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
9-11 October 1989

DRAFT INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN BEGINNING 1992

Reproduced herewith is the draft introduction to the Medium-term Plan, 1992-1997 which was considered by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its resumed twenty-eighth session held at United Nations Headquarters from 6 to 19 September 1988 (see document A/43/329)

UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/43/329
17 May 1988

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-third session
Item 116 of the preliminary list*

PROGRAMME PLANNING

Preparation of the next medium-term plan

Note by the Secretary-General

BACKGROUND

1. In September 1987, the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Some perspectives on the work of the United Nations in the 1990s" (A/42/512, enclosure) was submitted to the General Assembly through the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The "perspectives" paper was designed to serve as the basis for the introduction to the medium-term plan beginning in 1992. It was submitted pursuant to section II, paragraph 3 (b), of resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, in which the Assembly called for improvement in the consultative process for the formulation of the medium-term plan through, inter alia, submission of the introduction to the medium-term plan to Member States for wide consultations.

2. During the consideration of the "perspectives" paper by the Assembly at its forty-second session, a number of delegations made initial comments on the nature of the document.

3. At the same session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 42/215 of 21 December 1987, section II, paragraph 3, of which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to gather additional opinions, comments and suggestions from Member States on the "perspectives" paper. Subsequently, Member States made further observations on the paper in response to a note verbale on the subject from the Secretary-General.

4. In composing his draft introduction to the medium-term plan beginning in 1992,

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* A/43/50.

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the Secretary-General also had reference to a number of other sources, principally the Charter of the United Nations, decisions of the United Nations, particularly resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, and comments on the paper from within the Secretariat and the specialized agencies.

5. The Secretary-General submits the draft introduction in the annex to the present document in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, particularly Regulation 3.7 and Rule 103.7. Regulation 3.7 provides that:

> "The plan shall be preceded by an introduction, which will constitute a key integral element in the planning process and shall:
>
> "(a) Highlight in a co-ordinated manner the policy orientations of the United Nations system;
>
> "(b) Indicate the medium-term plan objectives and strategy and trends deduced from mandates which reflect priorities set by intergovernmental organizations;
>
> "(c) Contain the Secretary-General's proposals on priorities."

6. In the comments on priorities listed in section III of the annex, the Secretary-General was guided by Regulation 3.15, which states that:

> "Such priorities shall be based on the importance of the objective to Member States, the Organization's capacity to achieve it and the real effectiveness and usefulness of the results".

7. The Secretary-General also bore in mind the criterion proposed in the "perspectives" paper, namely, that a matter can be regarded as a priority if "the objective sought is of a nature that multilateral action is demonstrably important to its achievement" (A/42/512, enclosure, p. 8). A third consideration was the extent to which proposed activities tended to advance the United Nations further towards its goal of maintaining international peace and security by fulfilling the purposes set forth in the Charter.

8. In compliance with General Assembly resolution 42/215, the Secretariat has therefore for the first time submitted the draft introduction to the next medium-term plan for wide consultations with and among Member States before work begins on the drafting of the plan. Consequently, the Secretary-General invites Member States to consider and endorse his comments on the priorities of the United Nations in the next decade as set forth in section III of the annex.

9. At the same time, in view of the need to adhere to the calendar of consultations with intergovernmental organs, as called for in General Assembly resolution 42/215 and as set forth in document E/AC.51/1988/6, paragraphs 1 and 13 and annex I, the Secretariat would therefore propose that Member States endorse the structure of the plan as set forth in section I C of the draft introduction.

ANNEX

Draft introduction to the medium-term plan beginning 1992

PROLOGUE: THE WORLD IN THE 1990s

1. The United Nations was created to achieve goals which are both lofty and simple. The maintenance of international peace and security, respect for the rule of law and for the dignity and worth of the human person, respect for the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, the promotion of social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom are ideals that all persons of goodwill immediately understand and share.

2. During the lifetime of the United Nations, we have seen enormous improvements in the quality of life of millions of human beings. In 1945 the globe was ravaged by war and much of its territory was subject to colonial control. In the intervening years, global conflict has been averted. The great majority of people now live in independent States that are undertaking their own political, economic and social development. International law has been refined and extended as never before, and public awareness of human rights in all countries is spreading and deepening. The global economy has expanded at an unprecedented rate. Significant progress has been made in establishing a basic infrastructure for social development and improving the welfare of peoples.

3. Nevertheless, measured against the ideals of the Organization, the current state of world affairs is, in many respects, deeply disturbing. The system of collective security envisaged in the Charter is far from realizing its full potential, and violence and instability persist throughout the world. International law is often ignored. The dignity of many human beings is offended every day, in all parts of the world. The rights of the weakest peoples and nations are often subjected to the power of the strong. The oppressive system of apartheid is still in place. Heavy and unproductive expenditures on arms continue to escalate. Poverty, misery and hunger are widespread. The number of illiterate people is larger than ever before. Disparities within and between nations remain a source of frustration and instability. The continuing degradation of the environment threatens the world that future generations will inherit.

4. Despite the present dangers, there are positive factors that have the potential of transforming the current situation. The world-wide elimination of hunger, poverty and ignorance is within reach of human power and ingenuity. Improvements in communications and the spread of information have enlightened the world as never before. We have gained further insights into the links between issues such as peace, development, the environment, resources and population, and recognize that these are not separate questions, but are interrelated. The international community is addressing economic and social development with greater focus. There is a growing appreciation of the interdependence of nations and the need for collective action to solve common problems. The positive contribution of non-governmental organizations and the importance of popular support for international co-operation are increasingly recognized.

5. The kind of world in which the United Nations will be operating in the 1990s will be shaped to a great extent by these and other political, economic, social and technological trends already broad enough and deep enough to be discernible. However, still emerging and unknown developments will also influence the course of events. In assessing what the United Nations can do in the 1990s, Member States must take account of the progress achieved, of the enormous changes taking place in the nature of the problems they face, and of the means available for solving them.

6. New technology and new knowledge are breaking down barriers and bringing peoples face to face in ways impossible before. Frontiers beneath the seas and in outer space beckon us to peaceful and productive enterprise through international co-operation. The exploration of space and the oceans and the speed of communication and transportation have already given us a view of the world and its possibilities which suggest that international disputes and differences among peoples should be seen in a new perspective. The potent force of science and technology can be used for the benefit of all if properly harnessed and directed. It is essential that all be able to share in these advances and that they are not used to the detriment of humanity.

7. The nature of international security issues may become subtler and more difficult to address. The world will continue to confront the problem of regional conflicts, more limited in scope than global wars but still entailing a terrible cost in lives and resources. We will need increasingly to understand better the disparate nature of their origins. In some cases, the underlying cause of strife may stem from the rivalry of the great Powers; in others, structural anomalies left by colonialism may lie at the root of the conflict. Societal pressures resulting from inadequate economic and social development could be the primary cause of instability in some areas. Ethnic or religious factors can cause tensions that lead to violence between countries and peoples. Even where it is possible to resolve specific problems, this is likely to take time and to prove very costly in financial and human resources. It will also be necessary to develop means to anticipate impending political crises and to try to create conditions conducive to harmonizing divergent national interests.

8. Agreements on the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear missiles and the prospects for an agreement on a 50 per cent reduction in nuclear strategic weapons are very welcome. They reveal, however, the contrasting comparative lack of success in multilateral disarmament negotiations on weapons of mass destruction, on conventional weapons and on the control of international arms transfers. Apart from negotiations on chemical weapons, where prospects for further agreements are relatively good, progress here will depend on two factors. First, individual countries, the United Nations and other international organizations must achieve a greater sense of security among nations by reducing conflicts. Secondly, all countries, including both major arms suppliers and developing countries, must resist the temptation to buy and sell more arms. This may require the development of new international norms and attitudes, including changing the way we think about the international arms trade and the possession and display of arms as symbols of national pride. At the same time, we need to find common ground between those who assert that money released by disarmament should be spent on international economic assistance and those as equally convinced that disarming nations will have to spend this money on verification and on their own domestic needs.

9. The growing sense of the interdependence of nations should help the world community recognize and act on common problems. In consequence, international law will be even more important and a renewed effort will be required in law-making and codification. This is especially important in helping us deal with international terrorism, whose causes are manifold, but whose solution requires a common approach and joint action.

10. Another effect of growing interdependence could take the form of a more global approach to human rights and humanitarian and social efforts. Problems of injustice, poverty and human suffering are part of the common human condition, and they are much more similar than apparent differences between nations might superficially suggest. All countries, cultures and peoples have much to contribute to their solution. Governments with too narrow a view of their sovereignty and prerogatives may well find that their peoples have advanced beyond them in seeking and demanding innovative international and multilateral solutions to problems of this kind.

11. Economic and social development will continue to be hampered by some of the existing constraints, but efforts to advance and expand it should continue. Adopting and carrying out policies to that end is primarily the responsibility of national Governments, both of developed and of developing countries. Progress could stem from a wider variety of strategies that take full advantage of individual and national skills, material and human resources and the potential for regional and subregional co-operation among developing countries. It will also require a successful resolution to the problems of debt, commodities and resource flows, and the establishment of conditions in which all countries can play their full part in the global production and distribution of commodities, goods and, increasingly, services. An increased sharing of advances in technology and access to capital markets should also assist in this process. The development of human resources will require special attention, including action to eliminate the absolute poverty of so many in developing countries.

12. The continuing expansion and diversification of global production and distribution as well as the creation of larger and more integrated economic communities will result in significant changes in the structure, functioning and management of the world economy. The role of transnational corporations in this process will be increasingly important. The reorientation of the international economic policies of major centrally planned economies will have to be taken into account. There will be a need for a greater sharing of responsibility for and benefits from world economic management, especially if the current obstacles impeding progress in developing countries are to be removed.

13. Social issues will call for more intensive international co-operation as many local problems arise from the same global phenomena or take on similar characteristics in countries with different social systems and at different levels of development. Major shifts in population structures, rapid urbanization, technological advances and the transformation of economic and occupational structures will require major adjustments in social policy, the redirection of resources and institutional change to achieve social objectives. Greater understanding of the nature of development will focus attention on the

complementarity between physical investment and human resource investment, with a greater stress on social programmes that enhance the productive capacity and the participation of all members of society. Institutional reform will be directed towards providing better incentives, motivation and equitable reward for performance as well as promoting the well-being of more vulnerable groups in society. At the same time, the world community must continue to stand by to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and those suffering the effects of natural and man-made calamities.

14. These complex, varying and often contradictory trends in economics, politics and technology will help shape the next decade. Nation States will, of course, continue to play the central role in the conduct of international affairs in the future. But there are persuasive reasons for pragmatic governmental decisions to work together in the common interest, and this should logically lead to greater reliance on international organizations. The United Nations must function in the next decade so as to encourage rational choices through the effectiveness of its programmes and the capacity that it offers for multilateral problem-solving and conflict resolution. The effectiveness of the Organization in meeting this challenge will depend on the support of its Member States and their commitment to making full use of the potential of the United Nations and to carrying out agreed programmes of common action.

I. A FRAMEWORK FOR THE NEXT MEDIUM-TERM PLAN

A. Background

15. The next medium-term plan will see the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of this Organization. As the United Nations enters its second half-century, the accumulated experience and expertise of the first 50 years will enable the world community to build on the work accomplished since 1945. In general, standards that have been set should be applied; results of research should be utilized; and agreements reached in United Nations forums should be put into practice. At the same time, the United Nations must be prepared to respond to uncertainties and to adjust its activities to changing circumstances.

16. These views on the major goals and instruments of the United Nations are being presented at a time when the Organization is confronted with very serious difficulties and is undertaking a number of reforms, including a reduction of its personnel. Two assumptions underlie the approach to the plan. One is that by the beginning of the next decade, and possibly before, the current financial crisis will be an episode of the past. The second is that all Member States will through their actions demonstrate renewed commitment to international co-operation through the United Nations. At the same time, the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations should be assessed and improved in relation to the basic purposes of the Organization.

17. To carry out its mission and to deserve the trust placed in it, the United Nations must constantly detect its shortcomings and find remedies to them. The protection of the independence of the international civil service, as outlined in

the Charter, should be an integral part of the search for efficiency. Efficiency also requires that budgetary and extrabudgetary funds be used in accordance with the same priorities and standards in support of the Organization's activities.

18. The Organization needs therefore to strengthen its basic functions. The medium-term plan is one of the instruments at its disposal to achieve this goal. It ought to indicate our policy orientations, mandates and priorities and the type of activities that will be undertaken to further the Charter's intent during a particular period of the life of this Organization. The plan should therefore be a clear and dynamic instrument that will not only shape our successive programme budgets, but also guide the legislative bodies and the Secretariat in their endeavours. Not only at the time of its preparation, but also during its implementation, the plan should be a primary focus for discussion between the Secretariat and Member States, as well as among Member States. The early exchange of views on the introduction to the next medium-term plan is therefore particularly welcome.

19. This introduction sets forth policy orientations, objectives, mandates and priorities for the United Nations in the 1990s. However, it may be helpful first to describe briefly the instrumentalities of the Organization and the means of action available to them, and the structure of the plan.

B. Instrumentalities and means of action

20. At the outset, it should be recalled that the success of the United Nations depends on the joint co-operative action of the States Members of this Organization. The success of the United Nations fundamentally depends on the commitment of Members to carrying out the decisions that they have taken at the United Nations. Only through the agreed multilateral action of its Members can the Organization's purposes be fulfilled.

21. The United Nations, like other organizations with a universal vocation and message, cannot accomplish its mission without a character of its own. The independence of the international civil service is enshrined in the Charter, which obliges both staff and Member States to respect the exclusively international character of the United Nations Secretariat, the functions of which are set forth in Chapter XV of the Charter. The Secretary-General will continue to exercise in full the responsibilities entrusted to him, in particular the right to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. The various departments, centres and offices of the Secretariat, the regional economic and social commissions and, in general, the diversity, experience and expertise of the Secretariat are unique and irreplaceable resources at the disposal of the international community. Instrumentalities of the United Nations also include bodies that have been designed to address major special problems of the international community and that have since developed their own momentum and expertise, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Conference on Disarmament.

22. The United Nations programmes constitute a further vital instrumentality. These programmes, established for various economic, social and humanitarian purposes, were set up under the leadership of the Secretary-General and derive most of their resources from voluntary contributions. The United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Food Programme make an indispensable contribution to the well-being of the people of many countries.

23. The specialized agencies of the United Nations system have broad responsibilities in economic and social development, in standard-setting, in the promotion of human rights and in the provision of humanitarian and health services. It is essential that United Nations programmes should complement and not duplicate the work of the specialized agencies. Those agencies bear primary multilateral responsibility for those subjects with which they were specifically created to deal.

24. First among the means of action open to the Secretariat is the activity of the Secretary-General himself. His function as chief administrative officer of the Organization, his responsibility to present an annual report to the General Assembly on the work of the Organization and his right to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security uniquely equip him to play a pivotal role in assisting the international community to achieve the goals of the Charter.

25. The good offices of the Secretary-General, his capacity to comment or report on the vast range of issues before the Organization, the despatch of special envoys or missions by him, often in close consultation with or on the basis of decisions of the Security Council, and the deployment and direction of peace-keeping forces serve as a most valuable means of action at the disposal of the Organization.

26. In addition, the Secretariat promotes and facilitates technical co-operation in support of development. It provides technical advisory services to Governments and others, protects refugees and assists victims of natural disasters.

27. The Secretariat also has the means of communicating directly with the mass media and the general public, for example, through the public information facilities at Headquarters and the information centres throughout the world, interaction with non-governmental organizations, and technical and sales publications.

28. In the next category of activity are services for deliberating and negotiating forums, which include the substantive and technical planning and servicing of meetings and conferences in all official languages of the Organization and the drafting and production of documentation.

29. More general support activities include the collection, storage, analysis, retrieval, presentation and dissemination of information and statistics and the use of computerized techniques for doing so.

30. The Secretariat also provides legal services, including elaboration of guidelines, drafting of opinions and judgements and provision of legal advice. The Secretariat also performs depositary functions in respect of the agreements deposited with the Secretary-General and is responsible for the registration and publication of treaties and other international agreements.

31. Lastly, there are overall management and administrative activities, such as planning, programming, financial, personnel and general services, that enable the Organization to carry out its functions.

32. Secretariat activities should be seen in relation to the major programmes proposed below. When preparing the medium-term plan itself, the Secretariat will try to indicate as precisely as possible which means of action will best help the Organization attain the objectives embodied in the major programmes, programmes and sub-programmes. At the same time, instrumentalities and means of action must be selected and applied in a flexible manner. No plan, however well-formulated, can foresee all that the future holds, and the implementation of the next medium-term plan must be guided as much by the spirit of our intentions as by the letter of individual programmes and budgets.

C. The structure of the medium-term plan

33. If, as has been suggested above, the plan is to be a dynamic instrument expressing a strengthening of the essential functions of the United Nations, it must be simplified. First, the current division into "parts" (political, legal and humanitarian, public information, economic and social), lacks practical significance and unnecessarily complicates the structure. Secondly, major programmes should be reduced in number and should adhere more closely to the basic goals of the Charter. The plan would therefore comprise four major programmes, instead of the 31 in the current medium-term plan, as follows:

(a) Peace, security, disarmament and the self-determination of peoples;

(b) International law, human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(c) Economic and social advancement of all peoples;

(d) Information and common services.

34. All four major programmes stem directly from the preamble and Article 1 of the Charter, including the last, which concerns the functioning of the Organization and, in particular, its capacity "to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends". These four major programmes would comprise about 40 programmes, regrouping the existing 148 programmes.

35. This simplified structure, with fewer elements, does not in any way imply an overall reduction of the role of the Organization. On the contrary, more clarity in the design of its aims and a greater concentration of its activities should lead to an enhanced role and more effective performance. Further, proposals concerning

programmes for global co-operation in the economic and social domains will have taken particular account of the functions of the specialized agencies developed in accordance with Chapter IX of the Charter.

36. The succeeding section contains the mandates, programmes and priorities for the next medium-term plan. Proposals in this regard are presented below within the framework of the four major programmes listed in paragraph 33.

II. MANDATES AND PROGRAMMES

37. Over the years the work of the United Nations has broadened and deepened the concept of international security. The paths towards that goal are many and lead through a variety of fields of human endeavour. The international community, by a series of far-reaching and authoritative decisions taken within the United Nations, has already broadly indicated the directions in which it wishes to go. Those decisions, in the form of resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council that request action from the Secretariat during the plan period, are reflected in this section.

A. Peace, security, disarmament and the self-determination of peoples

38. In keeping with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has over the past 40 years been involved in the prevention, containment and resolution of conflicts. The Council has been dealing in the recent past with a very heavy work-load, devoting much attention to urgent situations. Even if some or all of those problems have been solved by the 1990s, it is prudent to assume that the Council's agenda will always remain a crowded one.

39. Its ability to deal effectively with that agenda must be not only maintained but reinforced. In particular, the Secretariat will continue to assist the Council in applying with flexibility and determination those methods which have stood the Organization in good stead in the past, such as the dispatch of special missions, the deployment of peace-keeping forces and the good offices of the Secretary-General.

40. Alongside the efforts for peace of the Security Council, the work of arms control and disarmament will be proceeding in bilateral and multilateral forums. Agreements have been reached between the two militarily strongest Powers in the spirit of the conviction that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. This fact, as well as the outcome of the 1988 third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, must provide a stimulus for negotiations to reduce nuclear weapons further and to conclude agreements on other disarmament issues and other kinds of weapons. It is important to continue progress towards a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, perhaps accompanied by the establishment of an international seismic monitoring network to verify compliance with such a treaty; to promote regional nuclear-free zones; to draft a convention on chemical

weapons; and to prevent an arms race in outer space. Work should also continue in strengthening regional measures to support peace and disarmament, including the designation of zones of peace and nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as confidence-building measures such as those adopted by the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe.

41. Few international issues are as complex and potentially dangerous as the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the question of Palestine, a matter with which the General Assembly and the Security Council have been seized for more than 40 years. During this time, the United Nations has frequently played a central role in assisting the parties to negotiate interim agreements, in the implementation of such agreements and in promoting the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement that the Secretary-General believes should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination. Over the years, the General Assembly has repeatedly reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and in 1983 it adopted resolution 38/58 C, in which it spelled out guidelines for the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and called on the Secretary-General to promote the convening of such a conference. The Secretary-General has made and will continue to make a special effort to promote a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the meantime, every effort must also be made to provide relief to the Palestinian refugees who, more than anyone, suffer the consequences of this tragic conflict.

42. The United Nations will continue to work for the elimination of apartheid, which constitutes the violation of human rights on a massive scale. The will of the international community has been clearly expressed by the General Assembly, which calls for the elimination of apartheid laws, the end to internal repression, the immediate cessation of acts of destabilization against front-line States, the release of political prisoners and the lifting of the ban imposed on certain individuals and on the African National Congress of South Africa and the Pan African Congress of Azania. Importantly, the General Assembly has called for national dialogue among the genuine leaders of the people of South Africa for the purpose of establishing a free, democratic and non-racial society. The United Nations will work towards these objectives through peaceful means, including assistance to victims of apartheid, and the promotion of international action aimed at bringing about an end to apartheid policies in southern Africa.

43. In the work of developing friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the contribution of the United Nations to decolonization stands among the Organization's finest achievements. However, the accomplishments of the past four decades in securing respect for the rights of nations large and small and in bringing the process of decolonization closer to completion cannot obscure the fact that the United Nations still has an important role to play. The responsibilities of the United Nations towards the few remaining colonial territories, including Namibia, will continue until their inhabitants can freely determine their future status. Guided by the Charter and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the work of decolonization will continue until every territory under colonial rule achieves the status chosen by its population without pressure of any kind. To that end the Secretariat will continue to support

the United Nations organs concerned with Trust Territories and Non-Self-Governing Territories in their review of the compliance with the Charter and the Declaration by those Member States responsible for the administration of those Territories. While substantive progress should continue until the peoples of all Territories achieve their right to self-determination, past and present developments indicate that questions related to decolonization will be before the United Nations well into the 1990s.

B. International law, human rights and fundamental freedoms

44. On land and sea, as well as in outer space, the United Nations has in the past 40 years helped construct a legal network to regulate a wide range of transnational activities undertaken by States and corporations. The elaboration by the United Nations of agreements, conventions, declarations and charters to set forth international laws, rights and duties will continue during the plan period. International security in its widest sense fundamentally depends upon respect for and compliance with international law. Indeed, many of the programmes for economic development and social advancement in the medium-term plan rest on international legal instruments and the norms enshrined in them. The United Nations leads and will continue to lead in developing international public and trade law, in particular by concerted efforts in the field of unification and harmonization of commercial law, in drafting a code of offences against the peace and security of mankind, in outlawing the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries, and in setting standards for the peaceful settlement of disputes between States and the strengthening of good-neighbourliness between them. Existing instruments governing friendly relations and co-operation among States, strengthening of international security and the definition of aggression, among others, should be supplemented by the further development of international law on terrorism. At the same time, the United Nations system should continue to act where it can to solve this problem. The General Assembly has appealed to all States that have not yet done so to consider becoming party to the existing international conventions relating to various aspects of international terrorism and to adhere strictly to them.

45. The oceans and seas will provide, in the next decade and beyond, even greater resources than at present, and their strategic and other uses will continue to grow. Issues arising out of the exercise of maritime jurisdiction by States will become more complex. There is increasing international support for the historic United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, indicating its likely entry into force as the new legal régime for the uses of the sea and its resources during the medium-term plan period. The United Nations will continue to have the responsibility for assisting States in the legal, political, economic and technical implications of implementing the Convention and in the development of a consistent and uniform approach to the new ocean régime. This will ensure that the ongoing and developing practice of States in giving effect to the provisions of the Convention will lead to its universal and coherent application and to the full realization of the benefits to be derived from it. With the Convention will come the birth of new kinds of institutions to administer international resources and to maintain peace and order in the oceans with both justice and commercial practicality.

46. Multilateral co-operation at the United Nations in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space has so far resulted in the development of international space law. In the future, apart from continuing its work to ensure that outer space is used for peaceful purposes only, the Organization should provide a forum for multilateral co-operation in the use of space technology for the benefit of all nations.

47. The United Nations human rights programme will continue to be a unique focal point for the promotion and protection of human rights universally. One of its prime objectives in the coming period will be to induce every Government to ratify basic human rights instruments and, very importantly, to live up to the obligations deriving from them. In this regard, the supervisory bodies for the Covenants on Civil and Political, as well as Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the conventions concerning racial discrimination, torture and apartheid, will have to further enhance the effectiveness and impact of their monitoring role. In particular, it is expected that a convention on the rights of the child and a convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and their families will enter into force. Moreover, the United Nations system will continue to refine the existing standards and to assist Governments in their implementation at the national level. In these endeavours special attention will be given to the elimination of racism and other forms of discrimination, in particular in the institutionalized form of apartheid. The struggle against racism remains of paramount importance. Activities and programmes within the framework of the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination will once again focus the attention of the international community on the need to finally eradicate this age-old evil. Special rapporteurs and working groups will pursue their efforts for the prevention and elimination of serious violations of human rights in specific territories or countries in order to eradicate phenomena such as disappearances, arbitrary executions or torture, and will further develop mechanisms for urgent interventions to save human lives in such situations. United Nations action to protect particularly vulnerable groups from violations, such as the forced sale or sexual exploitation of children and women, or to promote respect for the rights of indigenous populations and minorities will retain its importance. Today, human rights are increasingly perceived as being interdependent and, therefore, growing attention will be given to social, economic and cultural rights, including the right to development. Here, respect for basic human dignity in the development process and broad popular participation in the quest for justice and social progress will constitute important new areas.

48. A primary concern of the human rights programme is to meet the prerequisite of enabling people throughout the world to claim and defend their internationally recognized rights. Thus, a strong programme of information will have to focus public attention worldwide on basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. Concomitantly, the United Nations will increasingly make available its advisory services and technical assistance programmes to Governments, not least to assist them in the establishment of national infrastructures for the promotion and protection of human rights. By making people aware of their internationally proclaimed rights and by developing and improving national and international mechanisms of protection, we shall come another step closer to the realization of the Charter's vision of universal respect for human rights.

C. Economic and social advancement of all peoples

49. International development suffered serious setbacks in the 1980s. For the great majority of developing countries, output has grown slowly, debt burdens have increased and terms of trade have deteriorated, with the result that per capita incomes are below the 1980 level and conditions for many are worsening rather than improving. Hard-won social progress is threatened as development has been overtaken, in large measure, by adjustment. For the developed market economies, modest rates of growth have been accompanied by increasing imbalances. In spite of greater commitment to mutual co-operation, the aggregate results of their individual and collective efforts have not as yet provided a basis for vigorous, widely shared world growth. Socialist countries have experienced the limits of extensive development and the need for some basic structural adjustments has been recognized. Social development and environmental issues have been articulated with increasing focus, but in a climate of economic crisis and constraint they have failed to be fully integrated into national and international development policies. As disparities and imbalances widen, the world economy as a whole is marked by disquieting turbulence and uncertainty that clouds prospects for development. In the 1990s, a major effort will be required to achieve healthy global economic growth and to ensure that the benefits are shared by all.

50. In the coming years, the earth's ecological balance will face challenges from all sides. Desertification and deforestation and the threats of national and transnational pollution and contamination will increase unless our awareness of the interrelationship between resources, development, environment and population is translated into well conceived policies for national and international development. Great poverty and excessive consumption alike hold risks for the stability of the environment. Balanced growth, judicious consumption and the satisfaction of basic needs will be indispensable elements of sustainable development in the 1990s.

51. The United Nations has a twofold role to play in dealing with issues related to international economic co-operation and development. It provides a universal forum for the consideration of issues of concern to Member States, for the early identification and analysis of emerging problems and for the harmonization of the actions of nations. The United Nations also provides a multilateral framework for support for national development efforts, in particular through its operational activities for development. In all these efforts a critical requirement is close co-operation with all relevant bodies of the United Nations system.

52. The regional commissions have a vital role to play in the work of the Organization, as regional approaches are increasingly important in terms of dealing with differentiated social and economic problems and as a basis for concerting actions among Member States in the face of destabilizing global trends.

53. Efforts should continue to be made in order to strengthen co-operation between the United Nations and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and to enlist popular support and participation in the activities of the United Nations system in economic and social field.

54. The Organization's activities should be informed by a genuine appreciation that all development problems are different facets of the same reality, that these problems pose a threat to all countries, and that the problems are urgent. The United Nations system must in the next decade provide the stimulus, the forum and the intellectual leadership fo. a concerted effort to formulate a global economic framework to ensure the development and growth of all countries.

55. The Declaration and Programme of Action for a New International Economic Order and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States embody aspirations for a more just and more equitable pattern of economic relations and provide important guidelines.

56. The mid-term review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Decade and the Final Act of the seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development provide important agreed assessments of the complex elements underlying the present situation. The Conference, in addition, reached a broad understanding on the need for all countries to implement national and international policy measures to improve the environment for accelerated and sustainable development, which will serve as a fundamental guide to United Nations activities.

57. The General Assembly is to consider further action for the assessment of the third International Development Strategy and the preparation of a strategy for the 1990s. This should provide an important opportunity to renew the dialogue on development issues with a view to reaching agreement on co-operative action that takes into account the interests of all concerned.

58. Some specific issues are of such urgent and overriding importance as to require special attention. The present nature and extent of external debt poses a threat to economic, social and political stability and represents a major obstacle to the economic recovery and long-term development efforts of developing countries. Increased efforts are required to find a durable, equitable and mutually agreed solution to the debt problems of developing countries. The effort must be broad-based and must result in a growth- and development-oriented strategy that takes into account the interests of debtor and creditor countries and international private and multilateral financial institutions. The United Nations will continue to keep this question under review, and actions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund will lie at the heart of the efforts undertaken.

59. International trade is an important catalyst for development and for the growth of the world economy and will remain a focus of our attention. A successful conclusion of the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers in all aspects of trade, especially agricultural trade, will create new tasks for the United Nations. As regards commodities, every effort must be made to bring a meaningful Common Fund into operation, to arrive at additional commodity agreements and generally to pursue the strategy of diversification, as well as the processing and marketing of commodities by developing countries. Efforts to improve compensatory financing mechanisms should also be strengthened. In the meantime, the United Nations system will continue to give technical advice and assistance to Governments in their efforts to

strengthen the multilateral system, to halt and reverse protectionism, to remove distortions to trade and to improve access to markets.

60. The promotion of collective self-reliance among developing countries should be an integral part of the development effort. The United Nations has an important role to play in supporting co-operation among developing countries, in particular, through research and policy analysis to assist in the identification of economically feasible opportunities.

61. Similarly, the critical situation in Africa, which encompasses the majority of the least developed countries, will continue to be of major concern to the United Nations in the next decade. The mid-term review and appraisal, as well as subsequent decisions relating to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990, should serve to reinforce the mutual commitment of African countries to provide the necessary framework to launch long-term programmes for self-sustaining socio-economic development and growth, and of the international community to assist Africa in achieving this objective.

62. The United Nations should continue to devote full attention, especially through its operational activities, to the economic plight of the least developed countries everywhere, and of land-locked and island developing countries. The Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which will be held in 1990 to review the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries should provide guidance for its work. At this stage, it is already clear that further concerted efforts are required to transform the economies of those countries and to establish a sound basis for the provision of internationally accepted minimum standards of nutrition, health, transport and communications, housing and education, as well as job opportunities for all citizens, particularly the rural and urban poor, and to lay the foundations for self-sustained development.

63. The continued existence of widespread poverty in the world disrupts social harmony, ecological integrity and international security. The United Nations must continue to do its utmost to assist in efforts to reduce poverty, the elimination of which is both a critical element in development, and a moral imperative.

64. Social issues will assume increasing importance as an integral part of development strategy. The pace of growth is likely to be slow, which, together with the continued need for economic adjustment and limitations on budgetary resources, will hamper the search for solutions to social problems arising from economic stagnation or regression and rising unemployment and underemployment in many parts of the world. Even in conditions of economic growth, special attention must be given to protecting the welfare of vulnerable groups.

65. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women for the period up to the year 2000 set an ambitious agenda for changes in society over the next decade in challenging the world community to overcome thousands of years of inequality between men and women within a single generation. The next medium-term plan period will be crucial to the achievement of success in this global endeavour, as the emphasis shifts from legal aspects of discrimination to the elimination of

the obstacles to de facto equality through attention to the three interrelated objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women: equality, development and peace. The United Nations system must continue to work intensively to identify the root causes of inequality, to examine and disseminate information on successful national experience in overcoming them and to develop international norms and actions that can achieve the ambitious established targets. The system-wide medium-term plan for women and development and companion approaches in the areas of equality and peace provide a detailed framework for action.

66. Social issues are of universal concern and require particular attention. While there has been significant progress in the 20 years since the proclamation of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, much remains to be done. In recent years the international community has adopted international plans of action in the fields of social welfare, aging, disabled persons and youth. These international instruments have mapped out comprehensive programmes of action in both substantive and operational terms, against which nations can measure their efforts and progress towards improving social conditions for specific groups. At the international level the United Nations should strive for the implementation of the measures set out in these basic instruments, particularly as they pertain to the full and effective participation of all social groups in development.

67. Eradicating drug abuse is essential to the well-being of all people, especially young people, to the international control of crime and, in many cases, to the security of individual nations. Efforts now under way to combat the drug menace will continue into the next decade. The Declaration of the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, proclaimed in 1987, was a welcome expression of the political will of nations to combat the drug menace in all its forms. In formulating its programmes during the medium-term plan period, the United Nations will make practical recommendations on the basis of the framework provided by the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control, with the ultimate goal of strengthening action and co-operation at the national, regional and international levels in order to create a world free of drug abuse.

68. The Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders will be held in 1990. Its recommendations, policies and conclusions will greatly assist efforts to reduce criminality and to encourage the more efficient and effective administration of justice and will form the basis for the work of the United Nations during the medium-term plan period. The Eighth Congress will also benefit from an assessment of the results of the Milan Plan of Action adopted by the Seventh Congress.

69. Important social development programmes have been elaborated by the specialized agencies in their respective spheres. For example, the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997) is proceeding under the auspices of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The International Labour Organisation is elaborating programmes to deal with the critical issues of employment. The World Health Organization has established the goal of health for all by the year 2000, and the Global Strategy for the prevention and control of AIDS forms the basis for a United Nations system-wide effort to

extinguish this disease, which has reached pandemic proportions and threatens devastating economic and social consequences. The United Nations will continue to support this indispensable work to the full.

70. Development is a multifaceted process that touches on every aspect of human activity. While the United Nations has identified specific areas for action, they should be seen as part of an integrated effort to promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

71. The United Nations has a critical role tc play in promoting and catalyzing international co-operation in science and technology for development, particularly in developing countries. The review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development in 1990 will provide guidelines for developing a forward-looking strategy for incorporating science and technology in the development process and for promoting the endogenous capabilities of developing countries. The conclusion of a code of conduct on the transfer of technology would be an important contribution to this effort.

72. Efforts should continue to monitor world population trends and policies and to prepare the review and appraisal of the World Population Plan of Action. The implementation of specific work programmes will require close co-operation with Member States, other organizations of the United Nations system, including in particular the United Nations Population Fund, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

73. The World Food Conference adopted the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition in 1974. More recently, the Beijing Declaration once again reaffirmed that access to food constitutes a human right that must be defended by the international community. Food and agricultural issues, including related problems of rural development, remain at the centre of global attention. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and other bodies of the United Nations system will continue to co-operate in dealing with those issues. Food aid provided under the aegis of the World Food Programme should be a response not only to immediate needs, but should also contribute to longer-term development efforts.

74. Industrialization in the developing countries must proceed apace. This will enable developing countries to participate more fully in global industrial production and trade. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization has primary responsibility for working to achieve the goals established in the Lima Declaration and Plan of Action on Industrial Development and Co-operation, but this will require the support of all entities of the system.

75. Agreement on a code of conduct on transnational corporations would provide an environment in which individual countries could opt to benefit from this increasingly important feature of international economic activity. At the same time, technical and legal programmes will continue to assist developing countries to deal with transnational corporations.

76. The United Nations system must develop interrelated strategies to draw maximum benefit from water, energy and mineral resources. To do so, we must take advantage of new technologies, including remote sensing and microcomputer technology, in the search for and assessment and development of natural resources. In consultation with the regional commissions and organizations of the United Nations system, the Secretary-General should formulate proposals for a comprehensive strategy to implement the Mar del Plata Action Plan on the management of water resources during the decade 1991-2000.

77. Energy is another element indispensable to development and growth alike. Concerted international action is essential for the development of energy resources and the achievement of more balanced energy consumption world-wide with expanded use of new and renewable sources of energy. In developing countries factors such as the depletion of wood for fuel have critical implications for the well-being of their people, for development prospects and for the environment. Therefore, the United Nations should lead concerted international action to deal with those problems, in particular through the implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action for the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy. At the same time, the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency in developing and expanding safety measures for nuclear power generation should continue.

78. Efforts to improve housing conditions must also proceed apace, especially for the 1 billion people who are either completely without shelter or are living in homes unfit for human habitation. The Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 aims at providing adequate housing for all by the end of the century.

79. An important central service that the United Nations can provide to assist all development efforts is to reinforce its unique statistical and analytical capabilities for world-wide monitoring, forecasting and planning. This would assist countries in meeting future challenges and in developing and updating relevant standards and classifications. Continuing work in improving cartography and in standardizing geographical names is also valuable in this respect. The United Nations programme of public administration and finance also plays a catalytic role in improving systems of public administration and finance for development, in particular in developing countries.

80. The links between the problems of peace, security, disarmament, development and the environment are many and complex. Studies investigating the nature of those relationships, such as the results of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development and the World Commission on Environment and Development, as well as a number of international agreements in this field, can greatly assist further examination of these issues in the coming decade.

81. In the relatively brief time since the alarm was raised over the threat to the global environment, significant international progress has been made. The Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond has provided the international community with a detailed plan to combat environmental degradation and achieve sustainable development. Governments have shown that they can come together to agree on certain shared perceptions, goals and recommended actions to

meet this challenge. Another example of that sense of common purpose is the adoption in September 1987 of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Timely action is needed, too, to carry out the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification before it becomes too late to stop the destruction of more arable lands.

82. The General Assembly has decided to designate the 1990s as an international decade for natural disaster reduction. Under the auspices of the United Nations, the international community should foster co-operation to reduce through concerted international action loss of life, property damage and social and economic disruption caused by natural disasters, especially in developing countries. At the same time, it is essential that the Organization should maintain and improve the capacity to respond in a coherent and timely manner to the needs of those suffering from the effects of natural and man-made disasters.

83. International co-operation is needed to promote a more hospitable global environment for development. However, development is essentially a national challenge and takes place at the local level. Operational activities for development are therefore of critical importance to the work of the Organization in strengthening the capacities of recipient countries to plan and implement development policies and programmes in accordance with their goals and objectives.

84. The international financial institutions, in the context of their country-focused dialogue on economic issues and their consultative groups, and the United Nations Development Programme, other United Nations bodies concerned and the specialized agencies, through their contributions to country programming exercises and preparations for round-table meetings, are particularly qualified to provide, at the request of Governments, both substantive advice and financial support.

85. The United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Food Programme, as well as the International Fund for Agricultural Development, will be called upon to maintain and enhance their contributions to specific national programmes through the provision of technical and material support and advice on the organization of operational activities.

86. In operational activities for development, specific proposals will be duly designed to reflect the goals agreed upon in institutional forums, with appropriate adaptation to economic, cultural and social conditions. In this way, the linkages between the normative and the operational contribution of the United Nations system to development could be strengthened. In view of the relatively limited resources available to the United Nations for operational activities, the translation of agreed policy guidelines into effective programmes will require the full support of all countries, both recipients and donors.

87. Given the number of activities envisaged, including the implementation of the various programmes outlined above, and the number of actors involved, both bilateral and multilateral, co-ordination becomes a prime consideration. While this is primarily the responsibility of developing countries at the country level, the Secretariat should work together with Member States to support efforts to improve the co-ordination and monitoring of operational activities. Further

efforts to ensure the effective functioning of the United Nations resident co-ordinators as representatives of the Secretary-General and team leaders of the United Nations system at the country level, pursuant to the appropriate General Assembly resolutions, would contribute to fuller integration and improved coherence of action. It would also permit the development of multidisciplinary responses to the increasingly complex issues identified. The responsibilities entrusted to the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation are of particular relevance in this regard.

88. Similarly, it is important to reinforce the central funding and co-ordinating role of the United Nations Development Programme for technical co-operation provided by the United Nations system. The Programme, together with other organizations of the United Nations system, will continue to mobilize the skills and resources required to meet technical co-operation requirements, including those provided by developing countries themselves in line with the recommendations of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries. In all its efforts, the relevant bodies of the system should take full advantage of their mutually supportive roles as centres of substantive information, advice and experience and as funding and executing agencies.

D. Information and common services

89. The role of information is crucial in many of the activities of the United Nations system in pursuit of the goals of the Charter. Recognizing that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization also has an important role to play in this field, the United Nations supports the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information, guaranteeing diversity of sources of information and free access to information. The United Nations system as a whole should co-operate in a concerted manner, through its information services, in promoting a more comprehensive and realistic image of the activities and potential of the United Nations system in all its endeavours, in accordance with the purposes of the Charter, with particular emphasis on the creation of a climate of confidence, the strengthening of multilateralism and the promotion of the development activities in the United Nations system.

90. Member States, after devoting much thought to the matter, have provided guidance on ways to make the Secretariat perform more efficiently. Thus, by the time the 1990s are under way, the Organization will have completed far-reaching reforms in the Secretariat units dealing with the political, economic and social sectors. These measures will improve the Secretariat's administrative and financial functioning and its planning, programming and budgeting process. Furthermore, the implementation of the changes made by the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields will be proceeding.

91. However, while improvements will obviously always be possible, the functioning of the Secretariat should invariably justify the confidence of Member States. The

increased efficiency of the Organization also depends firmly on the commitment by all Member States to honour, promptly and in full, their financial obligations as set out in the Charter. This can be a favourable legacy from the 1980s that will permit the 1990s to be a time not of administrative reform but for administrative innovation - for finding new ways of better marshalling the resources of the Organization; for moving towards decentralization of authority in financial and personnel management, while ensuring that responsibility and accountability are properly matched; for placing much greater reliance on outside services whenever these are more cost-effective; and, of course, for taking advantage of technological improvements and innovations in office management, communications and conference servicing.

92. The medium-term plan will be based on the assumption that by the 1990s the Organization will be free from budgetary and financial uncertainty, that it will enjoy the full confidence of all its Members, and will be functioning in an efficient and effective manner. Sustained efforts to recruit and retain a qualified, independent and geographically balanced international civil service, reflecting the improved status of women within the Secretariat, are vital if the Organization is to remain responsive to Members' needs. The conditions of service of the staff must reflect their responsibilities.

93. The provision of conference services is an essential element in the efficient functioning of the United Nations, and the Secretariat will endeavour to continue to provide those services in the most efficient and cost-effective manner. The Secretariat will also continue to prepare for the approval of Member States draft calendars of conferences in which duplication and the overlapping of meetings dealing with similar subject-matters are reduced to a minimum. With an allocation of resources sufficient to ensure the provision of adequate conference services, those services will be provided with due respect for the equal treatment of all official languages of the United Nations.

94. Following the consolidation of the relevant administrative structures into one office, the integration of the system of programme planning, budgeting, performance monitoring and evaluation established in accordance with the guidelines of the General Assembly will be further refined in order to assist more adequately the relevant intergovernmental bodies in ensuring that the work programmes of the Organization are compatible and mutually complementary, and are implemented in accordance with the mandates and priorities of Member States and with maximum regard for efficiency and effectiveness. The refinements and clarifications brought recently to the budget process and the full involvement of Member States at a very early stage in the preparation of both the medium-term plan and the progamme budget should be fully adhered to and should be complemented by the full implementation of the provisions on priority-setting by the relevant intergovernmental bodies contained in the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. An agreement among Member States on priority activities would greatly facilitate further methodological developments on the monitoring of the delivery of outputs, the evaluation of the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the activities carried out by the Organization, and the efficient and co-ordinated management of these activities. Finally, increased emphasis will be

placed during the medium-term plan period on the strengthening of the functions of control in the spending of the scarce financial resources at the disposal of the Organization and on the fullest application of the principle of accountability of the responsible programme managers, regardless of the sources of funds at their disposal.

III. COMMENTS ON PRIORITIES

95. In its pursuit of the goals laid down in the Charter over the years, the Organization has by its resolutions and through its daily work demonstrated an enduring attachment to certain central principles and themes. The maintenance of international peace and security, the pursuit of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, the elaboration of international law, the promotion of the economic and social development of all peoples and the protection of human rights will remain the priorities of the United Nations in the coming years, as they have been in the past. However, these priorities take on new meaning and content for the 1990s to reflect changing circumstances.

96. The overriding imperative to maintain international peace and security has led to innovations and new approaches in the activity of the Office of the Secretary-General as well as in the work of the Security Council and the peace-keeping means at its disposal. The ability of the Council to perform its tasks must be not only maintained but reinforced, and the Secretary-General has therefore suggested that the Security Council could in the future make fuller use of possibilities available within the meaning of the Charter, including peace-keeping forces, to head off violence and facilitate the resolution of disputes before armed conflict occurs. When a potentially dangerous situation is identified, a fact-finding mission can be quickly dispatched both to gain a detailed knowledge of the problem and to signal to the parties the concern of the United Nations as a whole. Consideration could also be given to the establishment of a multilateral nuclear alert centre to reduce the risk of fatal misinterpretation of unintentional nuclear launchings or, in the future, the chilling possibility of isolated launchings by those who may clandestinely gain access to nuclear devices.

97. Another priority of the Organization must be to continue its work towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such a settlement should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and should take fully into account the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination. To this end, the search must be sustained for a negotiating process, under United Nations auspices, in which all parties to the conflict would participate.

98. Timely action is essential to put an end to the continuing tragedy in southern Africa. The Secretary-General has appealed to all Member States to use their influence on behalf of the development of social and economic progress in freedom throughout that region. This can only take place in adequate measure if apartheid disappears, if the human rights of all South Africans, and of the inhabitants of the region as a whole, are respected, and if the people of Namibia are permitted to

enjoy the freedom and independence that are their right. The concerted action of the international community is needed to achieve these goals.

99. The Organization must also continue to accord high priority to the work of its disarmament organs. While the main task is to provide a forum for multilateral negotiations and the development of agreements and conventions on arms control and disarmament, the United Nations will continue to carry out and publicize its research into all aspects of arms control and nuclear and conventional disarmament.

100. Other threats to international peace and security exist that are not susceptible of containment by States acting alone. The United Nations and its specialized agencies offer the premier forum for multilateral action in the priority tasks of building international legal constraints and concerting the actions of their members against such scourges as international terrorism and illicit drug trafficking.

101. Indeed, the development of legal norms to govern relations between States will continue as a major focus of United Nations activity. Upholding, strengthening and unifying the rule of law in international affairs, concluding and encouraging adherence to international agreements, the progressive development and codification of international law and the harmonization of international trade law will retain their central importance in the work of the Organization.

102. All the works of the United Nations must form part of a larger effort to promote the welfare of all peoples. To that end, international co-operation for development shall remain in the forefront of the Organization's goals. Hunger, poverty, disease, unfulfilled promise and wasted potential afflict the world's poorest, but their effects impoverish all humanity. The political independence won in the 1960s and 1970s must lead to economic self-reliance if the legitimate aspirations of all peoples to better standards of life in larger freedom are to be fulfilled. This will require an international economic environment conducive to development and to correcting present imbalances. The elaboration and implementation of a new international development strategy could provide a valuable opportunity for Member States to agree on the most appropriate strategic approaches to development in the next decade. A prime objective must be the integration of all sectors of the population, especially women, into the development process.

103. The capacity of developing countries to plan and implement development policies and programmes in accordance with their goals and objectives must be strengthened. This will require, among other things, a major effort in human resource development. Operational activities have a vital role to play in this regard, and the search for greater coherence and effectiveness must continue.

104. Adequate resources must be provided to support the efforts of the developing countries. One important step in that direction would be the resolution of the external debt crisis, and the United Nations will play its part in the search for solutions. With regard to trade, the system will provide a forum for negotiations aimed at the development of a more open, viable and durable multilateral trading system, which is essential to promote growth and development. In particular, there is a need to assist commodity-dependent countries in achieving stable and more

predictable conditions of trade, including the avoidance of excessive price fluctuations and the search for long-term solutions to commodity problems through diversification.

105. The Organization must maintain and enhance its capacity to respond to specific urgent needs. A vital task is to continue to address the critical situation in Africa. Work must be pursued through the coming decade to reverse the economic decline of the continent, to develop its economic and social infrastructures, to promote regional and sub-regional co-operation, to address the problems of drought and desertification, and thus to create a basis for self-reliant sustained development. Equally, the Organization must continue to give particular attention to the problems of the least developed countries.

106. The reduction of poverty is essential. It will require a concerted approach by the United Nations system, including in particular the regional commissions, in co-operation with the Governments concerned.

107. The need to ensure sustainable development, which includes preserving the Earth's ecological balance, will be one of the central themes for the coming decades. With the support of all countries, the United Nations must develop methodologies for practical programmes and activities accordingly.

108. Social development remains one of the major purposes of the Organization and contributes to and benefits from the overall development effort. Guided by agreements reached at the United Nations, Governments must continue to strive for greater social justice and better social conditions, especially for the disadvantaged and vulnerable. Among other things, this requires improved health conditions, and the prevention and control of disease, including AIDS, and the realization of the UNICEF universal immunization programme. The fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking, too, must receive maximum attention and support. The United Nations, as well as the international community as a whole, must continue to assist and support efforts towards those ends. Furthermore, the advancement of women will continue to receive priority attention, including within the United Nations Secretariat.

109. At the same time, the exercise by all of fundamental human rights in larger freedom remains an essential objective of the Organization. Negotiations in the United Nations and its agencies have largely succeeded in setting norms for the behaviour of States in their treatment of all their citizens, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. What is needed now is a more determined endeavour on the part of Governments to adhere to those standards. The elimination of racism and racial discrimination, religious intolerance and torture must be national as well as international priorities.

110. In acting as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations to achieve these ends the United Nations will become a more efficient and effective mechanism. This improvement in efficiency will depend more on the quality of the staff than its size and should inspire greater confidence in the United Nations among the Governments and peoples of the world. At the same time, the effectiveness of any organization in achieving its ultimate goals is the responsibility of its members.

The greater the task to be performed, the stronger is the commitment required for its execution. The maintenance of international peace and security through the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, through the institution of international norms of behaviour, through economic and social development and the defence of individual human rights cannot be achieved without the joint concerted action of Governments. The United Nations is the proper forum for the consideration of such action.

111. The period of intense absorption with its internal functioning that the United Nations has experienced in the mid- and late-1980s is resulting in a stronger, more efficient Organization. The real problems of the world, however, are outside these walls, and those are the problems which must receive the urgent attention of the international community in the years ahead. The United Nations in the 1990s, looking outward and with renewed vigour, will put its expertise and its facilities to work in addressing them.